FROM THE EDITOR’s DESK

To all, a Happy New Year for 2019; Gong Hei Fat Choy (for the Year of the Pig).

The key note for this Bulletin is that Group Captain Pat Cooper, CSC - immediate past Officer Commanding 44 Wing, will separate from the Permanent Air Force on 31 March 2019, after a career of 29 years and nine months. Pat has been a very strong supporter of the Radar Branch, and the President and Committee extend, on behalf of the membership, our heartfelt thanks for that support, and our very best wished for his future endeavours.

Amongst the key issues in this period are the new year command changes, the New Year Honours and Medallions, three Radar Wing Anniversaries, the arrival of the RAAF’s latest fighter (and no – I wasn’t around to see the arrival of the RAAF’s first fighter), and a timely reminder that some of our Fighter Controller Basic students have gone on to distinction in the Senior Service.

There are also two Bios attached to this bulletin, as part of our ‘Who’s Who’ series – this time it includes the new Officer Commanding 44 Wing – Group Captain Ruth Elsley and our Radar Branch Scribe, Ian Gibson.

CHANGES AT THE TOP

Commander Surveillance & Response Group

On 8 May 2019, Air Commodore Craig HEAP, CSC, will hand over command of Surveillance and Response Group to Air Commodore Barbara COURTNEY, AM. Air Commodore COURTNEY is currently deployed in command of Joint Task Force 633, and on return to Australia will take up command, and will become the first Joint Battlespace Air Controller (Air Traffic Control Officer to the old hands) to command the Group.

Officer Commanding, 44 Wing

On 29 January 2019, Group Captain Pat COOPER, CSC, handed over command of 44 Wing to Group Captain Ruth ELSLEY, CSC.

Commanding Officer, 3 Control & Reporting Unit

On 14 December, 2018, Wing Commander Jason BURSTOW handed over command of 3 CRU to Wing Commander Simon ‘Beast’ WILDERMUTH.
HAPPY BIRTHDAY, 44 WING

On 14 December, 1942, 44 RDF Wing was formed at Adelaide River, Northern Territory, however a Commanding Officer (FLTLT H.W. (Harry) Hannam) was not appointed until 4 January 1943. 44 Wing was formed to control all radar units within North-West area (Northern Territory and northern Western Australia), however formal control was not promulgated until 8 February 43 (faithful adherence to the tried and true RAAF principle of “Hurry up and wait”?).

At its peak, 44 Wing controlled 21 radar stations, covering an area from Wessel Island (north of Nhulunbuy / Gove to Potshot / Learmonth (Exmouth Gulf). 44 Wing was initially the holding unit for aircrew involved in Radar Countermeasures operations as ‘Special Operator’ flying with USAAF Liberator Squadrons based at RAAF Fenton. Two members, Wireless Operator/Air Gunners Sergeant Joe HOLOHAN and Sergeant John GRAHAM were lost on RCM operations.

44 Wing disbanded on 22 August 1944, with personnel and equipment passing to 5 RIMU (58 Mile, Northern Territory), whilst operational control of the Radar Stations passed to 105 FCU (Berrimah), 35 ZFC (Learmonth), 39 ZFC (Gove) and 40 ZFC (Broome).

44 Wing’s service in the North-Western Area during World War 2 would qualify the Wing for the following Battle Honours:

Pacific 1942 to 1945
Darwin 1942 to 1944

44 Wing returned to the RAAF Order of Battle on 27 November 2000, under the command of GCAPT T.C. Delahunty, in order to provide a higher headquarters for the RAAF Air Traffic control organisation. At this point in time, the Wing directly commanded the ATC Flights established at all ADF flying bases.

On 16 Feb 2011, the ATC Flights were aggregated into two squadrons, each perpetuating the “number –plate” of a distinguished World War 2 ‘Spitfire’ squadron. 452 Squadron, headquartered at RAAF Darwin, comprises the ATC flights at Darwin, Tindal, Townsville, Amberley, and Oakey. Headquartered at RAAF Williamtown, 453 Squadron comprises the ATC flights at Williamtown, Richmond, Nowra, Edinburgh and Pearce.

NEW FIGHTER AIRCRAFT ARRIVE AT WILLIAMTOWN

Many of us were around when the F-18 Hornet arrived in the RAAF – some of the older hands can remember when the Mirage III entered service (even older hands can remember the arrival of the Avon Sabre in RAAF service – no names, no pack-drill). The latest fighter in the RAAF inventory arrived at RAAF Williamtown on 10 December 2018, when the first two F-35 Lightning II aircraft (out of a total order of 72) arrived in-country, having flown in from the United States. These aircraft will enter service with 3 Squadron, and will commence a period of validation testing during 2019.

AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS LIST – 2019

Three members of the Air Defence/Air Traffic family received awards in the 2019 Australia Day Honours List. A further twenty were awarded Australia Day Medallions. Details are as follows:
AUSTRALIA DAY HONOURS

Air Commodore Barbara Ann COURTNEY, Member (AM) in the Military Division of the Order of Australia: for exceptional service in combat support unit operations, organisational reform, major international engagement and strategic capability development for the Australian Defence Force.


Flight Sergeant Leonie Angela READ: Conspicuous Service Medal (CSM): for meritorious achievement in training development at Number 3 Control and Reporting Unit for the Royal Australian Air Force.

AUSTRALIA DAY MEDALLIONS

The following members of the ‘Radar Family’ were awarded Australia Day Medallions:

452 SQN

SQNLDR SDS Arnold  LACW J Chan Tie  SGT RO Durighello  ACW KL Jeffrey
LAC A Jindal  FLTLT VK Lincoln  CPL GV Philip  FLTLT YA Van Der Want
Mr RR Vincent

453 SQN

FLTLT M Eves  LAC SJ Faulkner  FLTLT PM Haberecht  FLTLT DW Joinbee
FLTLT JJ Lowe  SGT RJ Mattingley  Mr JR Norris  FLTLT DB Roger
CPL B Rogers  FLTLT SL Wilkie

SACTU

FLTLT SW Scott

The President, Committee and all members of the Radar Branch join in extending the heartiest congratulations to the recipients.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, 42 WING

On 1 February 1943, 42 RDF (Radar) Wing was formed at Townsville, North Queensland, under the command of FLGOFF G.W. RANN, at Townsville, North Queensland. The Wing’s role was to control all radar stations in North-Eastern Area (i.e. QLD, Torres Strait & Netherlands New Guinea), and at the time of 42 Wing’s formation, there were 10 radar stations in the North-Eastern Area.

An aircraft establishment was created for 42WG, with an allocation of 1 x De Havilland Tiger Moth & 1 x Avro Anson, however there is evidence only of the arrival of Tiger Moth A17-10 (taken on strength on 6 April 43).

42 Wing subsequently established Detachments in Merauke (Netherlands New Guinea), Horn Island (Torres Strait) and Port Moresby (Papua). At the height of its service, 42 Wing controlled 18 radar stations, ranging from Dutch New Guinea, the Torres Strait islands and down the coast of North Queensland. However, in line with a re-organisation of the RAAF Air Defence & Radar arrangements, 42 Wing was disbanded on 1 October 1944.

Unit personnel became the core establishment of 2 Radar Installation & Maintenance Unit (2 RIMU), with all organic and equipment also passing to 2 RIMU. Operational control of the Radar Stations passed to 103 Fighter Control Unit (Townsville), 113 Mobile e Fighter Control Unit (Merauke) and 32 Zone Filter Centre (Horn Island). Its World War service would qualify 41 Wing for the following Battle Honours:
Pacific - 1943 to 1944
New Guinea – 1943 to 1944
Dutch New Guinea

On 1 January 2006, 42 Wing was re-formed at RAAF Williamtown, under the command of Group Captain D.J. Willcox, AM, CSC, to provide the higher command function for the AEW & C capability. On this date, 2 Squadron, one of the RAAF’s oldest and most decorated squadrons, (having re-formed on 18 January 2000), passed from the command of 41 Wing to 42 Wing.

On 14 September 2014, Prime Minister Abbott announced the commitment of a RAAF Air Task Group to the Middle East, in the war against the “Islamic State in Syria (ISIS)”. A key element of the Air Task Group was an E-7A Wedgetail.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY, 41 WING

On 26 February, 1943, 41 RDF (i.e. ‘Radar’) Wing was formed at Razorback, Port Moresby (Papua) under the command of FLTLT (later SQNLDR) B.F.N. (“Bert”) ISRAEL. The role of 41 Wing was to control all radar stations within the area controlled by No 9 (Operational) Group, RAAF, which at that time covered the mainland of Papua and the adjacent islands, numbering 8 stations.

To assist 41 Wing in the management and future siting of its assets, 41 Wing was, on 3 April 1943, allocated its own Marine Craft: RAAFV 15-03 “OOMOBA”, a 50-foot General-Purpose Launch, and a 26-foot Motor Dory “PUNAI”. These craft played an important role in the siting and deployment of those 41 Wing units sited, or to be sited, on the off-shore islands.

41 Wing pioneered amphibious lodgement of RAAF radars, beginning with the covert lodgement of 305 RS on Goodenough Island, and providing Site Survey teams for larger-scale landings on New Britain and the Admiralty Islands. Regrettably the lessons learnt were lost with 41 Wing’s disbandment, hence the embarrassment caused when 114 MFCU and its radars arrived at Tarakan in 1945.

When 41 Wing disbanded on 31 July 1944, it was responsible for 25 radar stations stretching from the Trobriand Islands in the south, along the south coast of New Britain, north-west along the PNG mainland to Aitape, and across to the Admiralty Islands in the north. On disbandment, most of the personnel and equipment at Razorback were transferred to provide the core for the No 3 RIMU Detachment at Port Moresby. Operational control of the Radar Stations passed to 104 FCU at King Spur, Port Moresby, 109 MFCU at Dobodura, 114 MFCU at Momote (Los Negros Island.) and 33 Zone Filter Centre (ZFC) at Milne Bay.

In recognition of its World War 2 service, the following Battle Honours were approved for 41 Wing on 9 July 1993:

- Pacific - 1943 to 1944
- New Guinea - 1943 to 1944
- Moresby - 1943
- Milne Bay
- New Britain - 1943
- Markham Valley – 1943 to 1944

A reorganisation of Headquarters Operational Command (HQOC) occurred in 1987, resulting in a major change of structure for the RAAF, and on 20 February 1987, No 41 Wing was re-formed on 20 February 1987. The RAAF’s three remaining radar units (114MCRU, 2CRU and 3CRU) were incorporated into 41 Wing at the same time, with 1 Radar Surveillance Unit (1RSU) joining the wing upon its formation in mid-1992.
WHERE DID ALL THOSE FISH-HEADS GO?

Apart from some ad hoc training at 1 CRU, the training of Royal Australian Navy’s Air Intercept Controllers (i.e. Fighter Controllers) was originally conducted with either the Royal Navy or the US Navy. However, in 1974, the training responsibility was passed to the RAAF, and the first RAN AIC Courses (36 & 38 ADCB) were conducted in 1974 at 2CRU Training Flight (which had assumed the Air Defence ab initio training role after the disbandment of 1 CRU in October 1973). Once the Training Flight stood up at 3 CRU in November 1975 (post-Cyclone Tracy), Navy AIC training resumed there in 1976. Training varied from ‘all-Navy’ courses to one or two Navy members on ‘RAAF’ courses.

The last ‘all-Navy’ course was 1/89 AIRDEFCONTBAS, and since then Navy students have been attached to RAAF courses. Noting that AIC training is just part of the building blocks in the progression of a Navy Officer to Principal Warfare Officer Training (a course that equates to the FCI Course in status and assets thrown at the course), it is not surprising that some of our Navy graduates have risen to heights yet to be equalled by their RAAF counterparts.

A future RADM and COMAUSFLT – LEUT Raydon Gates, graduated in 1978 (48 ADCB), whilst 60 ADCB graduated the future RADM Nigel Coates – also destined to become a Fleet Commander. Two VCDF have also been ADCB graduates - VADM Matt Tripovich 59 ADCB – 1982) and (current VCDF) VADM David Johnston (3/87 ADCB).

1/89 AIRDEFCONTBAS graduated a young Sub-Lieutenant Mike NOONAN, who in July 2018 became the first ADGE Training Unit graduate to become a Chief of Service. Vice Admiral Mike NOONAN’s photograph is attached, opposite.

1989/90 appears to have been a bumper crop for Navy AICs on the way up, with the future RADM Stu Mayer (another COMAUSFLT) graduating from 78 ADCB in 1990, and RADM Peter Quinn and RADM Brett Wolski graduating from 80 ADCB – also in 1990).

The first senior sailor to graduate as an AIC was POCSS Coe, who graduated from 110 ADCB in 1999, paving the way for a steady trickle of Senior Sailors undergoing Fighter Controller training.

RADAR BRANCH KEY EVENTS and COMMITTEE MEETINGS – 2019

Radar Branch Key events that are looming large are:

Radar Branch Annual General Meeting

The AGM will be held on 12 April 2019, in the James Room, Stockton RSL, 29 Douglas Street, Stockton NSW. The meeting will commence at 1100. Whether this meeting will include the presentation of the Branch Awards (“Pither” and “Ulett” is yet to be determined.

ANZAC Day, 25 April 2019

The Branch will participate in the ANZAC Day march, and all Branch members are encouraged to attend: a supporting contingent from 41 Wing contingent is anticipated. The post-march lunch will be held at Wests City, corner of King and Union Streets, Newcastle.

RAAF Association NSW Division Annual General Meeting.

The NSW AGM will be held at the Western Suburbs (Newcastle) Leagues Club, 88 Hobart Road, New Lambton. The afternoon of the Wednesday 5th June will be a forum of events issues submitted by Branches and Division. The actual AGM will be conducted on 6th June.

Under the new constitution, there is no separate State Assembly and no requirement for Branches to appoint voting delegates. All financial members of the Association are eligible to attend.
Committee Meeting Schedule

The Committee meeting schedule for the remainder of 2019 is as follows:

- June 14th – Committee Meeting
- August 9th – Committee Meeting
- October 11th – Committee Meeting
- December 13th - Committee Meeting, followed by Christmas Luncheon (venue tba)

Any member (‘Service’, ‘Full’ or ‘Multiple’) is welcome to attend any of the Committee Meetings. It goes without question that members of all categories are actively encouraged to attend the Branch AGM, the ANZAC Day march (in Newcastle) and the Christmas Thrash. Unless advised otherwise, Committee Meetings will be held in the James Room at the Stockton RSL, 29 Douglas Street, Stockton, NSW – commencing at 1100.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

**Radar / Air Defence History: December to February**

1 December 1958 - 114 MCRU Declared Operational, Butterworth, Malaya

114 MCRU, Butterworth, Malaya, completed its operational work-up period and formally assumed responsibility for Air Defence operations from 478 Signals Unit, Royal Air Force. The unit came under the operational control of 224 Group, Far East Air Force (RAF). The unit continued operations in support of 78 Wing and RAF units operating against the Communist Terrorists (“Malayan Emergency”) that had formed a part of 114’s operational work-up.

6 December 1943 - 42 Wing Fatalities: F/O Robert Gilbert THOMAS & LAC Terence Joseph HUTCHISON posted “Missing, presumed dead”, in overdue flight by aircraft DH84 “Dragon” - A34-25. The flight was from Townsville, North Queensland to the site of 313 RS at Mornington Island (Wellesley Group, Gulf of Carpentaria).

7/8 December 1941 - Japanese Air Raids on Hawaii, Malaya, Hong Kong and the Philippines: The Japanese commenced hostilities with consecutive attacks on Allied locations on 8 December (Malaya/Hong Kong/Philippines time-zones) & 7 December (Hawaiian time-zone). Two waves of 183 and 171 aircraft from six Fleet Aircraft carriers attacked the US Naval Base at Pearl Harbour with devastating results, however the vital USN aircraft Carriers were, fortuitously, not in harbour. The raid was detected 90nm out by an Army Signals Corps radar station at Opana Point, however the duty controller at Hickham Airfield, through disinterest and/or lack of knowledge, assumed that the contacts were an expected flight of B-17 bombers inbound from the US.

16 Dec 1943 - Radar Station Takes Part in Amphibious Assault on Enemy-held Territory: 335 RS (LW/AW Mk 1A), under the command of PLTOFF J.G. COLLEY, and comprising 28 personnel and equipment, landed under fire on Pilelo Island, Southwest New Britain, with elements of the 112th Cavalry Regiment, US Army. The assault force closed with and killed a force of Japanese defenders, and destroyed an enemy radio station.

Unloading of the radar and support equipment were conducted under frequent fire from the Japanese. Air defence operations over the next five months saw the unit suffer from unrelenting Japanese air raids (bombing and strafing), along with sneak night raids in rubber boats with phone lines being cut at regular intervals. Nevertheless, the unit still maintained a high plot output, which led to high level of compliments from the (US) 20 Fighter Sector.

This was the first occasion that RAAF Radar personnel had taken part in an assault landing on enemy-held territory.
25 Dec 1974 - Destruction of 2 CRU’s Radars, Cyclone Tracy: On this day, Cyclone Tracy devastated the city of Darwin and caused severe damage to the infrastructure of the RAAF Base. At the 2 CRU site at Lee Point, the three unit radar antennae and communications aerials were destroyed, whilst the Operations Building suffered some salt-water contamination and was structurally weakened. Whilst spare radars were in store at 2 Stores Depot Detachment ‘D’ (located in Dubbo, NSW), it became expedient to take 2 CRU off line for a period of years. After six months, the weakened building needed substantial re-building, which had a significant impact when the decision was made to reactivate the unit in 1982.

1 Jan 1992 - Joint Facility Alice Springs becomes a RAAF Unit: Based at Mount Everard, some sixty kilometres from Alice Springs, the Jindalee Facility (JFAS) – a joint DSTO Radar Division / RAAF facility - formally became a RAAF unit as No. 1 Radar Surveillance Unit (1RSU), under the Command of WGCDR P.J.C. Bevan.

Jan 2015 - RAAF Air Traffic Control Detachment Deploys to Sumatra: As part of the ADF contribution to Operation SUMATRA ASSIST, ten 44 Wing personnel were ordered to deploy to Banda Aceh (the regional capital of Aceh Province), in northern Sumatra to assist the Indonesians with the provision of Air Traffic Control services.

4 Jan 1942 – First Japanese Air Attacks on Australian Territory: Rabaul suffered its first air raid when twenty-two Mitsubishi G3M-37 Type 96 ‘Nell’ long-range heavy bombers attacked the airfield and the town. Fifty x 60kg bombs were dropped, with some falling on the airfield, the native compound and the Rapindik Hospital.

Two ‘Wirraway’ “fighters” of 24 Squadron attempted intercept without result. The failure was due to a mixture of the height and speed of the enemy and the woeful climb performance and speed of the ‘Wirraway’. Anti-Aircraft Battery, Rabaul, a component of ‘Lark’ Force (the Army’s Rabaul garrison), became the first Australian soldiers to go into action on Australian territory when the Japanese aircraft attacked. There followed daily air attacks until the Japanese landing on 23 January 1942.

6 Jan 1945 - RAAF Radar Countermeasures Aircraft Lost: A 462 Squadron Handley-Page Halifax III MZ469, Z5-N, flown by PLTGOFF Mervin ROHRLACH (RAAF), was lost over Belgium whilst returning from a ‘Spoofing’ raid against the Luftwaffe Air Defence System (462 SQN was a unit of 100 (Bomber Support) Group, RAF, which specialised in radar and communications countermeasures). The only survivor was the Wireless Operator, SGT Doug Lawrence, who became a POW.

10 Jan 1915 - Zeppelin Airship Attacks on Britain Authorised by the Kaiser: HIM Kaiser Wilhelm II of Germany authorised Zeppelin airship attacks on Britain. Initially, attacks were to be limited to targets of military / industrial significance. This decision eventually led the UK to the creation of the world’s first Integrated Air Defence system.

10 Jan 1942 - RAAF’s First Radar Station Commences Operations: RAAF’s first (experimental) radar became operational at Shepherds Hill, Newcastle, New South Wales – the station was co-located with the Coast Artillery Fortress Headquarters for the Newcastle Area. The radar was an experimental hybrid, employing an Army Coast Defence Artillery radar antenna with a UK Chain Home transceiver. The experimental unit disbanded on 15 Apr 42, with the personnel and much of the equipment being re-located to Bombi Point, Broken Bay. The Bombi station eventually became 19RS.
14 Jan 1945 - Radar Countermeasures Aircraft Lost: Shortly after departing its home base at RAF Foulsham for a “Window” (i.e. ‘Chaff’ spoofing raid on Mannheim, Germany, a 462 Squadron Handley-Page ‘Halifax’ III LL598 Z5-A, captained by FLGOFF Alan ASTILL, crashed 12nm from the airfield. In addition to the Pilot, five other members of the eight-man crew were killed.

27 Jan 2010 – Air Traffic Controllers deploy to Haiti. On this day, the first two members of a five-strong air traffic control (ATC) team left Sydney for Miami in the United States, in preparation for joining the international relief effort in the Caribbean island of Haiti following a devastating earthquake on 12 January. The five Australian officers, all from the RAAF’s No 44 Wing, were embedded with a US Air Force team, and conducted pre-deployment training in Miami before moving forward to Port-au-Prince on 12 February.

29 Jan 1943 - Airlift in to Wau: The airlift of ground forces into Wau was carried out over a four-day period. Successive waves of 18 transport aircraft, with significant fighter escort of ‘Airacobra’, ‘Kittyhawk’ and ‘Lightning’ aircraft were coordinated by 4 Fighter Sector, Port Moresby.

7 Feb 1942 - First Operational Radar Unit Arrives in Darwin. The first operational RAAF radar unit, having deployed from RAAF Richmond to Darwin, NT, occupied the site selected by WGCDDR PITHER at Dripstone Caves on this day. The unit became a detachment of 5 Fighter Sector on 25 February, and was subsequently commissioned as an autonomous unit - 31 RDF Station - on 1 June 42.

11 Feb 1971 - Formation of Headquarter, Integrated Air Defence System, Butterworth Malaysia. Headquarters Integrated Air Defence System (HQ IADS) was formed under the terms of the Five Power Defence Agreement (signed by the UK, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore) for the defence of the Malaysia-Singapore region. The Officer Commanding RAAF Butterworth, AIRCDRE R.T. SUSANS, DSO, DFC, was promoted to the rank of AVM, and on this day assumed command of IADS.

12 Feb 2010 - 44 Wing Detachment Deploys to Haiti. On 12 January, 2010, a massive earthquake devastated the Caribbean island of Haiti, destroying the capital - Port-au-Prince - killing more than 220,000 people and leaving 1.3 million homeless. As part of the United States response to the disaster, the USAF requested assistance from the RAAF for the provision of ATC specialists. This recognised the ICAO rating of RAAF Air Traffic Controllers, who could legally provide safe and effective control of the mass of military and, more importantly, civil aircraft delivering humanitarian aid through Haiti’s shattered airports. A five-strong 44 Wing team deployed to Port-au-Prince on this day, as an embedded element of a USAF airfield/air traffic services team. Prior to the deployment the RAAF group had undergone pre-deployment training in Miami (Florida).

16 Feb 2011 - ATC Flights Re-configured as Squadrons. On this day, the Air Traffic Control Flights were re-configured into two squadrons. This re-organisation was marked by the re-formation of 452 and 453 Squadrons - two very distinguished “Spittfire” squadrons from World War 2. 452 Squadron, with headquarters in Darwin, comprises flights in Darwin, Tindal, Townsville, Oakley and Amberley. 453 Squadron comprises flights in Williamtown, East Sale, Edinburgh, Nowra and Pearce.

17 Feb 1942 - First Japanese Aerial Reconnaissance of Sydney. At approximately 0430, north-east of Sydney Harbour, the Japanese aircraft-carrying submarine HIJMS/m I-25 (LCDR TAGAMI Meiji) launched a Yokosuka E14Y1 ‘Gleri’ floatplane, flown by Warrant Flying Officer FUJITA Nobuo and Petty Officer 2nd Class OKUDA Shoji. The reconnaissance was carried out without incident, with no reaction whatsoever from the local defences, Okuda counting 23 ships in the Harbour, including a large 3-funnel warship, 2 destroyers and five submarines. The ‘Gleri’ landed alongside I-25 and was hoisted inboard and safely stowed. The same aircraft was subsequently launched in Bass Strait on 26 February for a successful, unmolested flight over Melbourne.

19 Feb 1942 – First Enemy Attack on the Australia Main-Land

On this day in 1942, the Imperial Japanese Navy carried out two massive air attacks on Darwin, Northern Territory, as planned by Admiral YAMAMOTO, the mastermind behind the 7/8 December 1941 attack on Pearl Harbour, Oahu (Hawaii). The first wave was launched by four aircraft carriers and comprised 188 aircraft, including fighters torpedo aircraft and dive-bombers, which concentrated on the Port and the City of Darwin. Two hours later. A second wave, comprising 51 land-based IJN bombers attacked the civil airfield at Pararaparap and the RAAF Base at Winellie.
The carrier-based force had been spotted en-route to Darwin by coast-watcher, Father McGRATH at Bathurst Island and reported to Darwin. Details were incomplete as he had to take cover when the mission was strafed. The Raid also spotted by coast-watcher John GRIBBLE (a Naval Reservist) on Melville Island, however this report was not passed on to the Navy WT Station, COONAWARRA. The Senior Intelligence Officer at Navy Headquarters, LCDR J C.B. McMANUS, passed the contact report to RAAF Darwin, however the RAAF Intelligence Officer incorrectly identified the contact as USAAF P-40s returning to Darwin.

24 Feb 1945 - 462 (Radar Countermeasures) Squadron Suffers its Worst Losses in a Single Action. During a radar countermeasures 'Spoof' raid on Neuss, Germany, 462 Squadron suffered its worst losses of its service with 100 Group RAF. Four Handley-Page 'Halifax' aircraft were lost on the operation, with 27 aircrew in Action (KIA) and only 5 surviving to become POWs.

25 Feb 1942 - Birth of the RAAF Air Defence Ground Environment (ADGE). On this day the Royal Australian Air Force formally established an Air Defence organisation, with the formation of the first Fighter Sectors (1 FS, Bankstown, 2 FS New Lambton, 3 FS, Townsville, 4 FS, Razorback Port Moresby and 5 FS, Darwin). Based on the successful Royal Air Force model, which had been proven in the Battle of Britain, the Fighter Sectors were to coordinate air contact data from the various radars and Volunteer Air Observer Corps (VAOC) reporting posts, to provide data for the fighter squadrons assigned to their respective areas of responsibility. Of these units, only 5 Fighter Sector actually had a Commanding Officer appointed on the day of formation. The Dripstone Caves radar unit formed a Detachment of 5 Fighter Sector.

26 Feb 1935 - The First Use of Radio Signals to Detect Aircraft

The first successful application of radio signals to detect an aircraft was conducted by Sir Robert WATSON-WATT, using the BBC short-wave beam transmitter at Daventry, England. On 12 February 1935, Watson-Watt sent the secret memo of the proposed system to the Air Ministry Detection and location of aircraft by radio methods. Although not as exciting as a death-ray, the concept clearly had potential but the Air Ministry, before giving funding, asked for a demonstration proving that radio waves could be reflected by an aircraft.

This was ready by 26 February and consisted of two receiving antennas located about ten km away from one of the BBC’s shortwave broadcast stations at Daventry. The two antennas were phased such that signals travelling directly from the station cancelled themselves out, but signals arriving from other angles were admitted, thereby deflecting the trace on a Cathode Ray Tube indicator (passive radar).

The demonstration was a success; on several occasions a clear signal was seen from a Handley-Page Heyford of RAF Bomber Command, being flown around the site. Most importantly, the Prime Minister, Stanley Baldwin, was kept quietly informed of radar’s progress.
GROUP CAPTAIN RUTH ELSLEY, CSC  
Officer Commanding Number 44 Wing

Group Captain Elsley joined the Air Force in July 1994 as a direct entry officer after having completed a Bachelor of Science at the University of Adelaide. She graduated from 117 Basic Air Traffic Control Course in 1995 and has seen operational postings to Naval Air Station Nowra and RAAF Base Amberley for Air Traffic duties.

As a junior officer she achieved all of her air traffic control endorsements to training officer and supervisor level and has served as Senior Training Officer and Operations Flight Commander at RAAF Base Amberley. She also completed a tour as Aide de Camp to the Chief of Air Force in 2000.

She was promoted to Squadron Leader in January 2004 and has had several staff positions including the Wing Aviation Safety Officer for 44 Wing (Air Traffic), Staff Officer to Commander Surveillance and Response Group and Flight Commander/Senior Air Traffic Control Officer at RAAF Base Williamtown. During her posting as the Wing Aviation Safety Officer she served on operations as Commander Australian Contingent and Aviation Safety Officer for the United Nations Mission in Khartoum, Sudan in 2005. Upon completion of her Flight Commander duties, Elsley deployed to the Combined Air Operations Centre in Al Udeid, Qatar in 2008/9. She completed Joint Command and Staff College in the United Kingdom in 2010/11, graduating with a Master of Arts in Defence Studies from Kings College London.

On return to Australia in 2011 she was posted as Wing Commander Project Manager 5431 in the Ground Telecommunications and Systems Program Office within the Defence Material Organisation. Subsequently in 2012 she took up the role of Executive Officer at 44 Wing, where she was the administrative commanding officer of the Headquarters. In 2015, Elsley was appointed as the Assistant Air Force Adviser as part of the Australian Defence Staff in London. She returned to Australia in 2018 on promotion to Group Captain to assume the role of Officer Commanding 44 Wing within Surveillance and Response Group.

Group Captain Elsley received a Conspicuous Service Cross for her outstanding achievement as the first Commander Australian Contingent for the Australian Defence Force’s contribution to the United Nations Mission in Sudan.

Group Captain Elsley is single with no children. Her interests include keeping fit, sailing, running, yoga, scuba diving and she is a keen traveller.
IAN GIBSON
Secretary, Radar Branch, RAAF Association

Ian Gibson joined the Australian Defence Force in 1976 as a member of the Army Reserve. This followed four years in the Air Training Corps where he reached the lofty heights of Cadet Under Officer. In the Army Reserve, Ian was awarded the Best Recruit 1 Platoon, 2nd Battalion Royal New South Wales Regiment, but after contemplating life while lying in mud, in pouring rain, in the middle of a cold, dark night, on a weekend at Singleton range, Ian decided that the Army Reserve was no longer for him.

Following an initial rejection by the Air Force in 1974 when applying for aircrew, Ian took his skills to work at the BHP Steelworks in Newcastle (as all good Newcastle boys did). After being retrenched from BHP in 1982, Ian again applied to join the ADF in 1983, applying to both the Army and the Air Force. He was accepted by the Army, but luckily had a good Army recruiter (surely a rare thing!), who told him to wait and see if the Air Force wanted him, as the Air Force application was for an officers job, whilst the Army was for a basic soldier (memories of mud and rain). Shortly thereafter, the Air Force saw their previous error of judgement and offered Ian a career as an Air Defence Officer, which he gratefully accepted; being appointed an Officer Cadet on 4th June, 1984.

Completing Officer Training School at Point Cook, Victoria in August 1984, Ian was then posted to No 3 Control and Reporting Unit (3CRU) at RAAF Base Williamtown for Air Defence Controller Basic course. Graduating from ADCB in December 1984 and commissioned as a Pilot Officer, Ian was posted to 3CRU Operations, where he distinguished himself by having the then Chief Controller state that he ‘should look for another career!’ While at 3CRU, Ian qualified as a line controller, Surveillance Officer, Identification Officer and Senior Controller. Flushed with success, in June 1986 Ian was posted to 2CRU Darwin, NT.

While consolidating his operational expertise over the next couple of years, Ian was selected for Air Defence Computer Programmer course, held at Detachment E, HQ Operational Command, but located at 3CRU. Although passing the course, it was deemed by all concerned that programming was not a good fit for Ian. He was then selected to control on the Fighter Combat Instructor's course in 1989, the first employing the RAAF’s recently acquired F/A-18 fighters, culminating in Exercise COPE THUNDER 89-6 at Clarke Air Force Base, the Philippines. At the conclusion of the course, Ian was presented with the first of the Fighter Combat Controller certificates issued by No 2 Operational Conversion Unit. This was the precursor to the now highly competitive Fighter Combat Controllers course.

Now one of the RAAF’s elite fighter controllers, Ian was posted to No 1 Joint Communications Unit (1JCU) in Woomera, South Australia for satellite surveillance operations. While at 1JCU, Ian qualified as an Operations Crew Commander, Operations Crew Instructor, Operations Crew Evaluator and led his crew to three successive Crew of the Quarter awards. The first Gulf War (Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM) took place during this posting and although not officially recognised (due to not being ‘in theatre’), 1JCU crews played a pivotal role in that war. During his last year at Woomera, Ian was appointed DOT, which in the US parlance is Chief of Operations Training.

In May 1992, Ian was posted back to 3CRU and was the Chief Controller until his promotion to Squadron Leader in January 1994 and consequent posting to HQ 41WG as the Air Defence Ground Environment Standardisation Officer (ADGESTANDO for short). Following two years at 41WG, in January 1996 Ian was posted to RAAF Command and Staff College Point Cook, resulting in the award of a Graduate Diploma in Management Studies.
In December 1996, Ian was posted to Executive Officer, No 1 Radar Surveillance Unit (1RSU) in Alice Springs, NT. This posting rounded out Ian's surveillance credentials with an Over the Horizon Radar Surveillance Officer qualification, to add to his microwave radar and satellite surveillance qualifications. In order to put some of those staff skills to use and on promotion to Wing Commander in September 1997, Ian was posted to the Joint Operational Radar Network (JORN) Project Office in Canberra as Deputy Director for Operations and Communications.

January 2002 saw Ian posted to SO1OPS HQ 41WG, followed in November 2003 with a posting as Commanding Officer, 3CRU during which he oversaw the acceptance into service of the recently acquired TPS-77 Tactical Air Defence Radar System (TADRS). In January 2006, Ian was posted to HQ Surveillance and Response Group as the Project AIR 5333 Transition Officer, responsible for bringing the newly acquired Vigilare system into service at both the Eastern Region Operations Centre, RAAF Base Williamtown, and the Northern Region Operations Centre, RAAF Base Tindal, NT. During this posting, Ian was also responsible for developing the Statement of Operating Intent for the deployment of a Control and Reporting Centre to the Middle East in July 2007.

In October 2007, Ian was deployed as Commander Task Group 633.12 to Kandahar, Afghanistan; a posting that Ian considers the highlight of his career. On return from Afghanistan, Ian resumed work in HQSRG, until he was posted to Capability Development Group (CDG) in Canberra in September 2009, working on various capability support programs, none of which seemed to survive the CDG bureaucratic process. Again seeking the solace of operations, Ian deployed to the Middle East as the Executive Officer Air Component Command (Deputy Air Component Commander) from January to August 2011.

On his return to Canberra, and obviously as punishment for something, Ian was responsible for compiling and editing two successive Defence White Papers and Defence Capability Plans, before a posting to Command and Staff College as a member of the Directing Staff in January 2013. For personal reasons, Ian sought a posting to Williamtown in mid-2013, and assumed the role of Executive Officer Australian Defence Force Warfare Training Centre, responsible for joint operations training courses.

In July 2014, having completed just over 30 years full time service, Ian took the decision to transfer to the Active Reserve and took up a position working in HQ 42WG as SO1 Deployment Planning on a two to three day per week basis. This position became an ideal transition to retirement for Ian and, although remaining an Active Reservist, he ceased work in November 2016.